



# Libby and Troy Residents

## Vermiculite or Asbestos In or Around Your Home or Business

EPA Information Center • 108 E. 9th Street, Libby, MT 59923 • 406-293-6194  
DEQ Troy Information Center • 303 N. Third Street, Troy, MT 59935 • 406-295-9238

*Revised: May 2012*



### Vermiculite in Libby

Vermiculite was used in a variety of forms for decades in and around Libby homes as a soil additive, a lightweight aggregate for concrete, and attic

insulation, among other things.

If vermiculite is present, it may contain Libby asbestos. It will take several years to complete the cleanup and people may encounter vermiculite during that time. Vermiculite will continue to be discovered from time to time long into the future and even after cleanup by the EPA. It is not possible for EPA to remove all the contaminated vermiculite. Vermiculite may be left in sealed walls, home foundations, and other relatively inaccessible areas.

Some encounters with vermiculite will be small and may include:

- **minor renovations** – removing old carpets, installing ceiling fans, or removing wall outlets.
- **minor landscaping** – replacing bedding for plants and mowing.

There will be times when a large pocket of vermiculite is discovered. Such situations may include:

- **intrusive digging** – septic systems, sprinklers, and water lines.
- **major renovations** – taking walls down, putting in windows, etc.
- **fires** – fire-fighting and subsequent cleanup.

### Protect Yourself

Hiring a licensed asbestos contractor to clean up vermiculite spilled while doing home improvements is recommended to minimize your exposure.

### Take Steps to Avoid Exposure

1. For a small quantity, such as a handful of vermiculite, wet wipe it and throw it away. For a small quantity of vermiculite in surface soil, such as a very isolated area or a few random flakes, we recommend you wet it and have it removed by contacting the Environmental Resource Specialist (ERS). **If possible, leave it alone.** If the material is buried, keep it that way – it's better buried than at the surface.
2. HEPA filter vacuums are effective on small quantities of vermiculite indoors. **Never vacuum vermiculite with a regular vacuum.** HEPA vacuums and wet wiping can be used periodically to remove any small amounts of asbestos containing dust that is introduced into your home or to vacuum dust from previously inaccessible locations such as under recently removed carpets, appliances and furniture.
3. For larger quantities of vermiculite, such as what you may find in a breached wall, do not disturb the material. **Do not vacuum large amounts of vermiculite – even with a HEPA vacuum.**
4. Dry mowing or rototilling in yards and gardens where vermiculite is found may cause asbestos to become airborne. If possible, sprinkle your yard or garden with water before mowing or tilling.
5. If you encounter a large amount of vermiculite in soil that cannot be avoided, such as when it was used around pipes, around other structures, or as bulk fill – you may have sparkling soil – **do not disturb the material. Contact ERS for appropriate evaluation and removal.**

6. If you are planning on remodeling your home, find out if there is vermiculite in the attic or walls, or any of the materials that will be taken out, disturbed, or are likely to create dust. You can call the EPA Information Center at 293-6194, if you are unsure. You should also be aware of specific regulations regarding remodeling, demolition and disposal that may impact your work, especially big projects.
7. Renters – You have a right to know about any adverse conditions at your rental. Ask your landlord about the presence of vermiculite. If you do not receive the information you request, contact the EPA Information Center or Lincoln County Sanitarian.

**Libby asbestos is toxic. It should be avoided or handled with extreme care. The health risk from exposure to all asbestos depends greatly on the amount of asbestos in the material you are disturbing and how long the exposure lasts. Frequent exposures to high levels of asbestos for lengthy periods of time pose a significant risk. Little disturbance of small amounts of vermiculite insulation or other products containing a low level of asbestos poses a smaller risk, especially if you take basic precautions.**

### **Who Can I Contact With Questions About Asbestos?**

**EPA Information Center: 406-293-6194**

**DEQ Troy Information Center: 406-295-9238**

**ERS for the Libby area: 406-291-5335**

**ERS for the Troy area: 406-291-0272**

EPA, the ERS or DEQ may send personnel out to inspect a situation involving vermiculite or LA. They might advise the owner to allow EPA or a licensed asbestos contractor or inspector to take samples, conduct cleanup or take other special measures to reduce the risk of asbestos exposure. A list of licensed inspectors and contractors can be found at the Information Center.

**Montana Department of Environmental Quality  
Asbestos Control Program: 406-444-5300**

Montana law requires that employers hire a licensed inspector to determine if asbestos is present before doing any work. Asbestos that is not associated with the Libby vermiculite mine is still regulated by Montana DEQ. If non-Libby asbestos is found, it should be dealt with according to Montana regulations. Visit Montana DEQ's Asbestos web site at [www.deq.mt.gov/Asbestos/](http://www.deq.mt.gov/Asbestos/).

Please learn about the risks of asbestos exposure and basic precautions by reviewing the fact sheets available at the **Information Centers** or on the EPA Libby website at [www.epa.gov/libby](http://www.epa.gov/libby).

- **HEPA Vacuum Cleaner Program** – *Revised, April 2012*. Provides information on the effectiveness of HEPA vacuums and describes their role in Libby's cleanup.
- **Lincoln County Do-It-Yourselfers** – *Revised May 2012*
- **Contractors & Tradesmen Working Indoors** – *Revised May 2012*
- **Contractors & Tradesmen Working Outdoors** – *Revised May 2012*
- **Yard Work and Gardening Activities** – *Revised May 2012*
- **Demolition Activities** – *Revised May 2012*